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AUTHENTIC WRITING AND ASSESSMENT:
FACILITATING THE LEARNING PROCESS OF CHILDREN'S WRITING

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Masters of Arts
in
Education: Reading Option


by
Pamela Lea Cleland-Broyles
March 1997

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ABSTRACT

The focus of this project is to facilitate the learning process of children as they become competent writers who recognize and value their own abilities. In this project, the writings of Nancy Atwell (1987), Regie Routman (1991), and Lucy Calkins (1991) will guide the teacher in creating a learning-centered classroom using authentic writing techniques and strategies. Routman emphasizes that when writing in the classroom is relevant to students, the result is students who are writers negated in and valuing the process of writing. Writing done for real purposes produces good writers (pp. 170-171).

As the children engage in writing projects, the teacher and students will develop rubrics as well as other authentic assessment tools which define effective writing in areas of both content and mechanics, Donald Graves (1994) states that teachers and students alike need to know what the student knows and work together to construct a shared vision of how the student will carry out that vision. From this shared knowledge between teacher and student, expectations are set and growth occurs (pp. 83-92).

The students will use the rubrics to analyze their work in terms of strengths and weaknesses, and to set goals for improving future work. Children will develop an awareness

of what they know and what they need to learn while developing confidence in their abilities.

Rhodes & Shanklin (1993) define classrooms where the curriculum is ("child-centered" as places where the teacher makes instructional decisions based on what is known about each student's strengths, interests and needs (p. ix). The additional involvement of students in the process of assessment benefits both the teacher and the student. Routman (1991) notes that the process of assessment and evaluation go hand in hand to help teachers make instructional decisions (p. 302). The teacher will use the data gathered in the assessment process to determine future classroom and individual student instruction which will help the students progress in their ability to write effectively while developing their own style of written communication.

Included in the project are sample rubrics which were created by teacher and students together. These rubrics were developed to help define the actual assignments before the students began to do the work. They were then used to assess the students' work, and to help the students set realistic goals for improving future work. The students were encouraged to celebrate their successes as well. Additionally the teacher used the rubrics to determine future instruction on an individual, small group and

classroom basis.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction and Statement of the Problem

To some children writing comes naturally, and to others it is an extremely challenging task. As a result, some children love to write and others detest it.

Throughout history educators have tried hundreds of ways to encourage children to write, to enjoy writing and to feel good about their writing. Today children are writing more than ever before and at a much younger age.

But what makes a good writer? And how does a child know what good writing is? Is writing strictly the content, format, or style? Are both the mechanics of writing (conventions) and writing style equally important? Does all writing require the same format and style? How do we assess writing at various stages of proficiency, and how do we recognize and honor individual growth and progress? This project will begin to answer these questions and provide a model for assisting children in coming to know the answers as well.

The state of California has recommended fundamental changes be made in the assessment process at the elementary level. One goal of these revisions is to develop an "authentic assessment program. . . consistent with the

ambitious goals of the thinking curriculum" (Elementary Grades Task Force, 1992, page 71). While authentic assessment practices differ in many ways, a primary function is "to inform students of their progress in reaching desired performance levels and to help teachers identify what students know and still need to learn" (Elementary Grades Task Force, 1992, p.67). In order to meet this goal, assessment tools must be created which meet the needs of both student and teacher, and additionally encourage understanding and involvement of parents.

A child-centered and learning-centered approach to instruction and classroom management will be applied in order to meet these goals. The teacher and students will work together to create a stimulating learning environment for the community of learners. Reading and writing will be integrated with all components of the curriculum. The students will be introduced to authors with different writing styles as well as a variety of genres. Reading quality literature will be an on-going activity in the classroom. Books which encourage thought and discussion and lead to the sharing of the students' lives will be read. Children will be encouraged to share their own writing. Both authentic writing (real writing used for real situations) and authentic assessment will be used. The

teacher will act as guide and facilitator of learning and will be part of the learning community as well.

In a learning-centered classroom, children become empowered to determine their learning, and the curriculum is negotiated within the community of learners, with a focus on the process. The emphasis will be on "meaning-making" and integration of knowledge into the lives of students.

As children work through the reading/writing processes, they are observed by the teacher. The teacher empowers learners with the responsibility for self-evaluation (Harp, 1991). Often in a collaborative evaluation session (student/teacher), the children are assisted by focusing attention on a particular facet of language or language learning. The assessment may begin with "reflective questions posed to a single child during a conference, a small group of children or the whole class. Later such questions become part of the children's own inner evaluative conversations - part of the repertoire of self-evaluation" (Reardon, 1991 p. 103). Children who are excited about a topic of study, an event in their lives or in the lives of characters in books, naturally include reflective thinking in their learning process.

Another key component of a child-centered classroom is student choice and decision making; choice of reading

materials, of writing topics and choice of the focus of a curricular unit of study (Routman, 1991, p. 437). Children want to write about things of interest to them and about which they have knowledge. Students and teacher work together to determine assignments that will inspire writing and create opportunities for risk taking and growth.

In classrooms where the process of writing is the focus, strategy lessons which highlight specific aspects of literacy are instructional tools which support children in their expanding knowledge of writing (Harste, 1988). Strategy lessons provide an opportunity for both students and teacher to be reflective. Children learn to ponder and question their work, rather than rush through an assignment just to "get it finished".

In a child-centered classroom, a teacher might demonstrate a specific writing genre or style, and then ask the students to describe what they have observed. This is accomplished through questioning strategies and more demonstrating. The teacher might ask the students what is unique about the writing, if it reminds them of something they have read, etc. In demonstrating writing, a teacher may be the writer or use another author's work to show what the children are to discover and learn. The children then participate in creating an assignment using this style or

strategy in an authentic writing assignment, such as writing legends for a class book to be given to the school library, or writing a persuasive letter to the principal about the need for a cold-water drinking fountain. This process is repeated in varying ways as the children practice what they are learning in "real" or authentic writing situations.

An important step in acquiring and developing knowledge is learning about what you are trying to accomplish. It is important for children of all ages and stages in their development, to recognize the skills and talents they are acquiring. They need to know what is expected of them, be able to state that expectation themselves and recognize whether or not they have fulfilled the expectation.

Traditional grading does not specifically encourage the child to develop metacognitive awareness. An assignment is completed by the student, turned into the teacher and returned with a letter grade. There may be a few comments or marks with the infamous "red pen" and a letter grade is placed on the paper. Generally the student, particularly an elementary student, is unable to say why they received a certain grade, nor are they able to justify the grade in their own mind. "Educators are in the process of finding better ways to describe children's growth. Grades are still assigned in many schools, but portfolios and conferences

where children describe what they've learned, are beginning to replace traditional practices" (Glazer, 1995).

A learning-centered classroom encourages teachers and children to communicate expectations and requirements. As children learn what is expected of them, they are able to articulate these expectations in their own words and translate both the teacher's expectations and their own into their work projects. As children gain this understanding, they place higher expectations on themselves and not only do their abilities grow, but their confidence and willingness to take risks increases as well.

Writing is a process rather than a single act or a finished product. Harste, Short and Burke (1988) use the authoring cycle to illustrate the writing process. The steps involved in the authoring cycle may also be included in a rubric. The children will be first process oriented in their writing assignments, and as their writing is taken to the publishing or public stage, they will develop a sense of pride in their "product".

The rubrics may also include the use of specific strategies. A strategy, such as "leads" is demonstrated: the teacher uses an opening paragraph or an entire story to search for an opening sentence which will immediately grab the readers' attention and draw them into the writing. Once

chosen, this sentence becomes the first sentence of the story, report, etc. The teacher emphasizes using these strategies as important and necessary components of the writing process.

Writing strategies are varied and involve all aspects of writing. In the "Picture Setting" strategy children are asked to select a photograph from a set of landscapes that do not include people or animals. Once photographs have been selected, students are given the opportunity to discuss their selection telling why they chose it and what "story" it brings to mind. The students are then asked to draw the "characters" on a separate piece of paper and "place" them in the photograph. The children are then given another opportunity to talk about their characters and the characters' stories. Finally the children are asked to write the "story" of their picture setting and characters (Busch, 1994). Some students may choose to take this written story through the authoring cycle to the publishing stage while others may not. The student is usually given the opportunity to choose what writing is published or taken to the public stage.

A strategy such as Picture Setting may be used after students have had several opportunities to work on using dialogue in their writing, or have developed a repertoire of

descriptive words and phrases and are developing the ability to create a "picture with words". These strategies are taught as "whole" projects yet may then be incorporated into the students overall expanding writing knowledge.

Children can be taught many writing strategies through effective demonstration and practice with individual feedback. Children need to develop and create their own constructs for acquiring knowledge. A teacher's primary role is to facilitate children in the process of "coming to know" and in using this knowledge. Children develop an awareness of the learning process, new information is integrated with prior knowledge, and a personal mindfulness is created.

The teacher will use "strategy lessons" which highlight important aspects of literacy in relation to the students' current knowledge. As students begin to include dialogue in their writing, the teacher will demonstrate various ways in which dialogue can be incorporated into writing. This may be done through a teacher's writing, published writing or by using various student writings. When a teacher sees a need to encourage the use of descriptive language, a strategy lesson might be given to help the students recognize the need for a variety of descriptive words, and together they might generate a word list of expressive words. Children in

a classroom do not all need the same strategy instruction at the same time. Small group instruction in which a teacher pulls together a group of students with the same needs is an effective use of time. Harste (1988) defines strategy lessons as "self-correcting invitations to growth, self-evaluation, and curricular planning" (p. 99).

Strategy lessons are used to provide children with awareness and choice while empowering the learner.

"Strategies are not given as formulas or rules to be applied, but rather as options that can be used to construct meaning" (Harste, 1988, p. 101). The link between reading and writing is ever present in a learning centered setting. Children are encouraged to use writing as a way to explore and expand their knowledge in all areas. As they develop in one area, an increased awareness connects to previous knowledge, which leads to more questions and a quest for more knowledge, thus developing a self-motivated and enthusiastic learner.

"Rubrics" will be created by students and teacher as the vehicle for assessment of students' writing. The primary goals of the assessment (while it will be used additionally for grades and report cards) will be to assist children in developing an awareness of what good writing is, in recognizing their own strengths and weaknesses, and in

gaining confidence and pride in their abilities.

Throughout the year the children will be engaged in writing projects across the curriculum which have been jointly created by teacher and students. As the assignments take form and students gain an understanding of their own creative process, the students and teacher will collaboratively generate rubrics (authentic assessment tools), which outline the specific requirements of the project. The teacher's role will be to make sure the children have the information and knowledge they need to both recognize and meet these requirements.

The children will come to know the difference between the mechanics of writing, the content of the piece, and the style or genre necessary for each task. The rubrics will be divided into categories which include: Writing Process, Mechanics, Content, and Presentation in order to assess their performance in these separate areas. The child is able to focus on the "whole" project in the "content" area and yet see the need for the conventions of writing as they assess their performance in each specific area. The words may vary, but the focus of each section of the rubric will be consistent. The rubrics themselves will vary depending on the focus of the writing as well. The rubrics will be developed collaboratively by teacher and students as the

children begin to write for the specific assignment and have a thorough understanding of the task at hand. The construction of the rubric aids in helping the students gain a more complete definition of the project.

The student and teacher will use the assignment-specific rubric to assess the student's writing and overall performance. This may be done independently or by the student and teacher in tandem. Rubrics will be used primarily for writing which has been taken through the authoring cycle to the publishing stage. Because children have prior knowledge which has been generated, they will have an on-going awareness of what is expected of them -- both by teacher and by themselves as authors. Of course, teacher and students are readers as well.

A component of the rubric/assessment process will be a final analysis in which the child will use the rubric to determine (and write) "what they did well" and "what they need to improve". Students will begin to recognize their strengths in writing and see where they need to focus most of their energy to improve their writing. As they gain confidence in their writing abilities, they will begin to take more risks, and as a result become writers who are developing their own style and a knowledge of their personal writing process.

A primary goal of assessment is to inform students of their progress and to help teachers identify what students know and what they still need to learn. Using rubrics jointly generated by students and teacher will assist both the student in their performance process and the teacher in working collaboratively with the student to meet the individual student's instructional needs. Knowledge gained from rubrics will also aid the teacher in curriculum planning and setting instructional goals.

Children naturally engage in the evaluation process. According to Reardon, "self-evaluation is a natural part of the student's own learning" (1991). Because children self-evaluate with or without our help, teachers are able to help students think critically about this process. As teachers facilitate this natural process, students develop an awareness of their own learning process and style. Students learn to recognize their strengths and use them well. Involving children in self-evaluation is a way of encouraging this process.

Reading and writing activities which are "real" involve opportunities for meaning-making. "Writing should be done for real reasons; students should have a large degree of control over the literacy event" (Rhodes and Shanklin, 1993, p.69). Children will write in the classroom as a way to

communicate in the same manner they will use writing outside the classroom. The students' interests will provide opportunity for choices which keep literacy activities as authentic as possible.

When children are shown that writing is a process rather than just the end product, they participate enthusiastically and fully in each step of the process. The children will be encouraged to include strategies which have been introduced in classroom lessons in the rubrics. Students will be motivated to take risks in their writing by trying new strategies as they are learned. As teachers listen to children discussing their writing, the process of children facilitating their own change and learning is readily observed.

Self-assessment by students requires a growing responsibility and awareness on the part of the student. Students who develop strong self-assessment strategies are also learning to be critical thinkers and problem solvers. These students will develop writing skills as well as gain an insight into their own learning process. Self-awareness and literacy development will enhance their academic performance in all areas. A love of literature and self-expression will be a source of enrichment throughout their lifetimes.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Authentic Writing

The purpose of this section is to review current literature that explores an authentic reading and writing philosophy. Definitions of learning-centered classrooms where both teacher and students are involved in authentic writing will be provided. The use of rubrics which are jointly prepared by the classroom teacher and students as part of authentic assessment practices will be reviewed. The use of authentic writing practices and authentic assessment which encourage an awareness of the writing process, and facilitate the development of strong confident writers will be investigated.

A Reading and Writing Classroom Philosophy

The integration of reading and writing instruction in all components of the curriculum is an important aspect of creating a classroom where the focus is on meaning. "Meaning-making", or the ability to understand and communicate through reading and writing is an agreed upon goal of most educators; however the way in which meaning is generated and imparted to students varies. The three generally accepted reading models are sound/symbol or decoding, skills, and whole language.

The sound/symbol model, also called graphophonemic, teaches children basic letter/sound correspondence and rules for sounding out words. Learning to read means learning to pronounce words, or getting meaning from certain combinations of letters. Most proponents of a phonics approach seem to think that once words are identified, meaning will take care of itself. They emphasize rapid and fluent "decoding" rather than comprehension (Weaver, 1988, p. 42). Writing consists of phonetic worksheets and copying sentences written by the teacher from the board. The emphasis is placed on product, rather than process, and the teacher is in control of all aspects of the curriculum. Students are not involved in self-reflection or assessment.

The skills model views reading with a distinct set of skills. This model states that one makes sense out of reading by stringing words together (Harste, Burke, 1977, p. 3). This is also known as the sight word or "look-say" approach. An emphasis is placed on helping children develop words that can be recognized on sight. Flash cards, basal readers, and other devices are used which involve repetition of words. The sight word approach also seems to assume that once words are identified, meaning will take care of itself (Weaver, 1988, p. 42). The curriculum for a skills approach is most often produced by publishing companies using a basal

reading series. The emphasis in a writing program is a product which demonstrates mastery of the new skills as they are taught. The teacher remains in control of the curriculum while adhering to the basal series.

A whole language model of reading assumes that the systems of language are shared and are independent and interactive aspects of a single process. The focus of reading is on "meaning-making" and is based on the oral language of the reader. Children are expected to learn to read and write in the same way they learned to talk, gradually and naturally. The teacher guides a child through the learning process relying on the child's own developmental process. Writing in a whole language classroom is viewed as a process rather than an accumulation of small skills. Learning begins with meaning and in that context the smaller pieces are studied. "In whole language classrooms, learning is often fostered through social interaction" (Weaver, 1990, p. 25). Children are encouraged to discuss, share ideas and work together in order to enhance learning. Writing is used in real contexts for real purposes. Students become responsible for their own learning and take an active role in assessment.

In the political and educational climate of the 1990's, "phonics versus whole language instruction" has once again

become a battleground. Whole language has been given poor grades by many, in part because it is not thoroughly understood. For the purposes of this review and project, the term "child centered" and "learning centered" instead of whole language will be used to define a classroom where learning is viewed as a complete entity. Much whole language philosophy and many whole language strategies will be employed in the classroom. Students will be active participants in determining curriculum and assignments, and will engage in self-assessment as well. Authentic writing and authentic assessment will be the primary means used by the teacher and students with a focus on developing strong writers. Reading and writing in real contexts will be ongoing, and students will learn many strategies which help them develop an understanding and knowledge of language and how to use language.

Real Kids Involved in Real Writing

Authenticity, reading and writing that is genuine or real, is an important aspect of the literacy environment in the classroom. Reading and writing must be done for real reasons--the same communicative purposes for which literacy is used outside the classroom (Rhodes & Shanklin, 1993, p. 69). Real literacy goes beyond the basics of reading and writing; a truly literate person is one who desires to read,

write, think, listen and evaluate for real purposes in real-life situations (Routman, 1988, p. 16).

An important attribute of an authentic writing program is introducing children to the many forms of writing that are used daily by most people. When writing done in classrooms is relevant to students they become engaged in and value the process. "Practicing writing through exercises, skill sheets and isolated activities does not produce good writers, and in fact, is not real writing" (Routman, 1991, pp. 170-171). Routman's (1991) writing for real purposes includes the following:

Books	Dedications
Stories	Brochures
Reviews (of books, movies restaurants, products)	Newsletters
Author page (for books)	Anthologies
Directions	Yearbooks
Notices	Book blurbs
Newspaper articles	Thank you notes
Reports	Greeting cards
Interviews	Summaries
"How to" manuals	Recipes
	Lists (for shopping, gifts, parties, things to do)

Advice Columns	Calendars
Surveys	Messages
Questionnaires	Bulletins
Evaluations	Posters
Instructions	Signs
Essays	Charts
Advertisements	Letters
Memos	Postcards
Poems	Conversations
Diaries	Want ads
Scripts/Plays	Announcements
Comic strips	Song lyrics
Rules	Magazine articles
Proposals	Guides
Invitations	Assignments
Journals	Commercials
Crossword puzzles	(pp. 170-171).

Judith Newman (1990) states that children "need to write for many different purposes. They need to write on topics of their own choosing. They need to write for real audiences -- for themselves, for both younger and older children, for adults they know and for some unknown general audience as well" (p. 56).

Another key attribute of a learning-centered classroom is student choice and decision making; choice of reading materials, of writing topics and choice of the focus of a curricular unit of study. Students who have the opportunity to participate in the decision making process of what to write about and which style to write in, are more actively engaged in the actual writing process. A sense of ownership and pride develops in the work itself (Routman, 1991, p. 437).

Real Classrooms - An Environment for Writing

Creating an environment that encourages children to write for real purposes provides motivation and meaning to children. Children learn to value writing as a way of expressing who they are and sharing their ideas. When writing in classrooms is relevant to students they become engaged in and value the process.

Atwell (1987), as cited in Routman (1991) establishes the following guidelines for establishing a classroom climate that encourages authentic writing:

A FRAMEWORK FOR BELIEFS ABOUT WRITING

1. Writers need regular chunks of time.
2. Writers need their own topics.
3. Writers need response.
4. Writers learn mechanics in context.

5. Children need to know adults who write.
6. Writers need to read.
7. Writing teachers need to take responsibility for their knowledge and teaching. (pp.17-18).

Routman (1991) adds the following to Atwell's list:

1. Writers need to feel safe to take a risk.
 2. Writers need a genuine purpose for writing.
- (p. 164).

Harste also stresses the importance of engaging children in writing opportunities and activities that are authentic in order to facilitate their writing. The teacher's role includes providing the opportunity for children to experience authorship and demonstrate authorship, and have their authorship and literacy valued. Children learn the writing process only by engaging in that process, and need opportunities and activities that:

- 1) Are Functional (for real purposes);
- 2) Encourage Social Interaction (ideas, meaning and internalization occurs through social interactions);
- 3) Are rich in texts and contexts (variety and multimodal);
- 4) Encourage transmediation (meaning is transferred from one communication system to another);

- 5) Link conventional forms to their functions in different communicative tasks (letters = Dear Ria);
- 6) Provide for a variety of audiences for authors (others than teachers and themselves);
- 7) Allow learners to explore the complexity of natural communication (don't make things too simple). (Harste, 1988, pp. 11-18).

Donald Graves believes remarkable writing is generated by students when conditions that encourage good writing are present. He includes the elements of:

TIME - at least four days a week for 35-40 minutes

CHOICE - students are free to choose their own topic

RESPONSE - teacher conference, peer input, sharing work

DEMONSTRATION - students see teacher in writing process using the skills and conventions of writing

EXPECTATION - student and teacher determine together

ROOM STRUCTURE - must be predictable and helpful

EVALUATION - children learn to judge their own work

(Graves, 1994, pp. 103-111).

Many common elements for classroom environment are found in the writings of Graves, Calkins, Routman, Atwell, Harste and other whole language proponents. Graves' inclusion of "expectation" is important because it calls for

a collaboration between teacher and student. Expectations based on real knowledge of the student and subject at hand provide realistic goals and encourage growth. When teachers and students share the same information, they can work together to construct a shared vision of what and how the student will carry out that vision. Teachers who understand the origin and direction of a student's writing can help guide the student in a more meaningful way. Feelings, details and language are important components of the writing process. With an awareness of these specifics, teachers are better able to help students develop as writers. Working with students to understand what they know and how they learned what they know about the conventions of writing is also important. From this shared knowledge between teacher and student, expectations are set and growth occurs (Graves, 1994, pp. 83-92). Knowledge of students' abilities and expectations makes it possible to individualize instruction and make learning meaningful for each student.

Another attribute of an effective learning-centered classroom is that the teacher know the students well. Lucy McCormick Calkins (1991) believes that to teach children to be writers we must invite children's lives into our classroom. The classroom must be a place that is filled with children's favorite books, rather than a teacher's neatly

organized library. As children fill their classroom with collections and areas of expertise, native languages and favorite books, they are creating an environment that has the materials needed for writing and reading (p. 14).

Creating a classroom that invites children to share their lives and their stories, helps teachers learn about their students' lives. Teachers may use interviews, surveys, questionnaires, and letters written by significant people in a child's life. "When children bring their lives into the classroom and we come to know those lives well, we cannot help but want to enrich them" (Calkins, 1991, p. 23). Caring about the children in our classrooms, knowing the story of their lives, and being a part of their lives is an important part of teaching. Imparting knowledge or skills to students palls in comparison to the impact of helping a child develop a life-long love of reading and writing. Reading and writing are ways in which human beings find significance and direction, beauty and intimacy, in their lives, and grow into powerful human beings (Calkins, 1991).

Real Teachers Involved In Real Writing

Another attribute of an authentic writing classroom is for the teacher to be part of the learning environment by writing in front of students, taking risks, and sharing who

with students. In this way, trust is created. Students don't need to be told how to write; they need to be shown through demonstration. Writing involves a constant sharing with others, talking and writing about ideas, and getting feedback on whether those ideas have worked or not. Helping children develop as writers, necessitates teachers sharing in the writing process by being writers themselves. By demonstrating the process of writing in action and inviting students to be part of the creative process, teachers help students figure out how to be writers themselves (Newman, 1990, p. 56).

Teachers are important as writing models for students. Just as teachers know the value of reading with and to children every day, teachers who demonstrate writing for children, write with children, and write to children are important components of an authentic writing program. Children who learn writing from teachers who are willing to share their own process and become users of language and risk takers themselves can expect this of children as well (Routman, 1991, p. 161).

Is This Real Writing?

As teachers work to develop authentic writing programs in their classrooms and create meaningful learning experiences for their students, reflection and evaluation

are important. "We all learn by doing, reflecting on what we have done, and improving our first attempts" (Graves, 1994, p. 361). As teachers engage in the exploration of teaching authentic writing, it may be helpful to have guidelines. Rhodes and Shanklin suggest the following questions to determine how authentic each classroom event is for students:

- 1) Are all language cues present? Are students reading or writing whole texts in a natural context?
- 2) Is the primary purpose for reading or writing a communicative one? Were the students reading or writing primarily for the sake of enjoyment, to learn something about the world, or to explore or expand their thinking, or were they reading or writing primarily to practice something or because you wanted to evaluate something?
- 3) What choices did the students have?
- 4) Did the students provide leads? Did you follow them? (Rhodes & Shanklin, 1993, p. 72).

Authentic Assessment

Real Teachers Assessing Real Students

Rhodes & Shanklin (1993) define classrooms where the curriculum is "child-centered" as places where teachers

makes instructional decisions based on the knowledge of each student's strengths, interests and needs. The information needed to make these decisions is gathered through the process of continual assessment (p. ix). Assessment is defined as the process of "carefully collecting or recording and analyzing students' literacy products and processes in a way that establishes a strong connection between the assessment data and the teacher's instructional plans" (p. 3).

The terms assessment and evaluation are often used interchangeably, but they are actually two parts of a whole. "Assessment" is the collection of data and is the beginning of the evaluation process. "Evaluation" is the interpretation, analysis and reflection of the collected data. The process of assessment and evaluation go hand in hand to help teachers make instructional decisions (Routman, 1991, p. 302).

As noted above, other educators define the two terms in different ways. For the purposes of this review and project, the term authentic assessment will be used, and will be defined as both the collection of data and the analysis of that data to determine instructional goals and plans.

"Authentic assessment is an idea whose time has clearly come. If authentic assessment becomes widespread, it will

spawn more appropriate instructional emphases in our schools" (Popham, 1993, p. 471). Authentic assessment isn't a single method. It includes both formal and informal processes. "Realistic assessment in the classroom must be based on several kinds of information collected over time" (Glazer, 1993, p. 132).

In the writing realm, informal assessment is primarily from observation, what Yetta Goodman (1991) calls "kidwatching" which is constant observation of the students by the teacher. "Teacher observation and judgment, especially of process, are the most valid means to collect and analyze data on children's learning" (Routman, 1991, p. 308). Ongoing evaluation includes the student's writing journal, writing folder, responses in discussion/conferences and participation in shared writing. Formal assessment might include writing taken through the authoring cycle to the publishing stage, class book entries, and tests of various types. When children are asked to write solely for the purpose of a test or a grade, it is often not their best writing because it lacks authenticity.

As young children engage in authentic writing, many educators focus on the "content" which is the story or information conveyed in the writing. As the students' writing abilities progress and more conventions of writing

are learned, then the importance of the "mechanics" of writing are also included in the assessment. The use of rubrics allows both the teacher and the student to see the student's strengths and weaknesses in these areas separately. Harste, Short, Burke (1988) use a single sheet of paper divided into thirds with the titles:

- (1) "Mechanics" where the teacher records new understandings and uses observed in each writing;
- (2) "Strategies" where the observations of the child's use of strategies throughout the day are recorded; and
- (3) "Insights", where "aha experiences" of the child are noted, as well as things the teacher thinks the child still needs to learn.

This "evaluation form" is available to both the teacher and student and students are encouraged to point out things the teacher may have missed, or add the comments themselves (pp. 65-57).

Real Students Assessing Themselves and Each Other

A major component of assessment for many child-centered educators/whole language proponents is the involvement of the student in the assessment process. Not only do educators want to determine for themselves the areas in which a student needs instruction, they want children to

learn to recognize their own strengths and weaknesses as well. Because teachers are required to "grade" their students, many teachers are choosing to include students in this process as well.

In a classroom that is child and learning centered, children are empowered by determining their learning, and the curriculum is negotiated within the community of learners with the focus on process. As the children work through the reading/writing processes, they are observed by the teacher. The teacher as evaluator empowers learners with the responsibility for self-evaluation (Harp, 1991, p. 101). Often in a collaborative evaluation session (student/teacher) the children are assisted by focusing attention on a particular facet of language or language learning. The assessment may begin with "reflective questions posed to a single child during a conference, a small group of children or the whole class. Later such questions become part of the children's own inner evaluative conversations-part of the repertoire of self-evaluation" (Reardon, 1991, p. 103).

"To begin to help students assess their progress, performance guidelines must be made clear and easily understood" (Enz and Serafini, 1995, p. 97). When the language of assessment is consistent, it provides learners

with guidelines for growth. It permits them, as well as adults, to talk about the writing in consistent ways. Consistent assessment requires frameworks for looking at childrens' products. Frameworks provide language that can be used consistently to describe the childrens' writing. They guide us to observe, describe, and finally, summarize children's behaviors, growth and needs. They permit teachers to observe children's growth, but can also be used by children to assess their own writing" (Glazer, 1994, pp. 108-109).

Glazer uses the term "assessment framework" to describe the form created to use with children when assessing their writing. This framework includes the expectations for the particular writing assignment, termed "Descriptors to Define Writing", on the left side of a page. On the right side students are asked to comment on how well they fulfilled the expectations. For example, the left side states: "the writing tells about the topic". The student then writes a determination of how well the writing tells about the topic.

Glazer notes that the framework is a simple one that can be expanded as children grow and learn. The more extensive the framework, the more children will learn about the language of writing. Descriptors will replace opinions and assessment will become an objective part of the

teaching/learning process (Glazer, 1994, p. 109).

Glazer uses various types of frameworks (called rubrics in this project) which involve students in the assessment process and help them discover new learning strategies as well. A "framework for assessing and increasing reading comprehension" is used to focus students on prediction. While these frameworks are not used as "grading tools", they provide both student and teacher with necessary information to assess strengths and weaknesses (Glazer, 1994, p. 109). Rhodes (1993) stresses that "assessment instruments must be directly linked to a teacher's instruction, instructional goals, and assessment questions if they are to be helpful" (p. 107).

Several rubric formats are used by teachers and students in assessing written work. "A Checklist Rubric defines the standard of excellence and usually requires an equivalent of a yes or no answer. Yes, it is there or not it is not. The item may be phrased in the form of a statement or question" (Aragon, 1994, p. 7). A checklist rubric is a quick form of checking for both completion and performance. The checklist rubric can be a valuable time saving tool for teachers. The teacher and student both use the form to determine the student's adherence to the expectations and the ability of the student to fulfill the requirements.

While it may be a "black and white" assessment, the teacher has the information necessary to work with the student toward improving the performance, and a student-teacher conference is often part of a check-list rubric assessment.

"The Rating Scale Rubric is used when students are working towards a standard of excellence and it is appropriate to provide benchmark feedback to assist them in measuring their progress toward that goal" (Aragon, 1994, p. 7). Rating scale rubrics may define several competencies which are rated using the same scale with each score specifically defined. A rating scale rubric from 1-6 is commonly used with each score detailed and defined.

Teachers may use an individualized and specifically designed rating scale rubric for each project, or a generic rubric may be used for all writing. The more specific a rubric is, the more information is available to both the student and the teacher for future goal setting and instruction.

Two basic forms of scoring are used in creating rubrics, holistic and analytic. Holistic scoring reviews a paper for an overall impression. Holistic scoring may apply to the written content only because it considers performance as a whole. The overall level of performance or competency is determined. Rapid assessment and ease of grading make holistic scoring desirable (Aragon, 1994). "By the

intermediate grades students' compositions can begin to be evaluated in terms of both content and form, and grades can be given. Merely giving a grade to a paper does not help students; extensive comments about the content and mechanics of the paper are necessary" (Rubin, 1990, p. 275). Some teachers apply holistic scoring to each of the five components of writing: sentence structure, content, vocabulary, development, and conventions (Flood & Lapp, 1989). In this way holistic scoring may be used in a rubric format. Hittleman (1988) has offered a 4 part rating scale to be used after the characteristics to be evaluated are established:

- (1) Little or no presence of the characteristics;
- (2) Some presence of the characteristics, but communication of the ideas or story is impeded;
- (3) Fairly successful communication of story through detailed and consistent presence of the characteristics;
- (4) Highly inventive and mature presence of characteristics (Aragon, 1994, p. 5).

In contrast to holistic scoring, analytic scoring involves isolating and scoring one or more characteristics of writing. This method is preferred when mechanics of writing such as punctuation, syntax or sense of audience is

the focus (Wolf, 1989). According to Flood and Lapp (1989) many teachers select analytic scoring techniques to gain needed information useful in guiding instruction.

"Analytical scoring provides analysis, self reflection on specific strengths, and areas for refinement" (Aragon, 1994, p. 7).

Real Rubrics Created By Real Teachers & Real Students

"The development of an efficient and reliable method for evaluating written language has been a concern of researchers and educators for many years. One controversy has centered on the analysis of the qualitative versus the quantitative features of writing" (Hall, 1981, p. 2).

Students invariably ask teachers, "how many pages?" or "how many words?" When they are given an answer, "5 pages" and they have completed writing five pages, students often feel they have completely accomplished the assignment. When a rubric is jointly created by students and teacher, everyone can be clear about what is expected. It is known that the length of the paper is not the most important quality because all aspects of the performance criteria are predetermined. "Rubrics are useful because they help students, teachers, parents and others understand what is expected for high-quality work. For example, students who have seen (or better yet, helped develop) the writing

rubrics will know how to define good writing. Rubrics make expectations explicit" (Winograd, 1994, p. 421).

"Evaluation that is ongoing and an integral part of the educative process is most effective when students 1) are involved in the process, 2) understand the purpose of evaluation, 3) have a need for it" (Rubin, 1990, p. 274).

Through good instruction and pre-established standards, writers know what constitutes good writing. Expectations are conveyed to students before they begin writing. In learning-centered classrooms it is important that students participate in the development of these performance standards.

When the standards by which a written work will be judged have been developed by the class, students can be expected to respond to and score papers written by other students. By learning how to read and evaluate the papers written by other students, they learn how to read their own. Students not only learn from others, but they learn about their own work as well (White, 1994, p. 19). This on-going process creates a sense of responsibility in students as well. A responsibility that extends to their own work, to the other students and to the classroom as a whole.

The State of California document, *It's Elementary* states, "the essence of authentic assessment is that it

gives information about student progress in terms of the learning goals that schools are trying to foster" (Elementary Grades Task Force, 1992, p. 71). Authentic assessment is more than a "snapshot" approach to student evaluation. Authentic assessment is both an informative and productive means of learning about a child. "Rubrics enable us to chart student growth, to profile a student's strengths and weaknesses, and to discuss the effectiveness of instruction" (Guthrie, Van Meter and Mitchell, 1994, p. 267). Authentic assessment informs students, parents and teachers of the progress made in reaching desired performance levels.

California's It's Elementary (1992) holds the idea that thinking pervades students' lives from kindergarten onward. Part of their thinking process is personal assessment. As educators influence self-reflection and assessment, they assist children in seeing their own strengths and learning as it takes place. Teachers reach this goal through both formal and informal assessment, as well as a personal rapport and knowledge of each student.

CHAPTER THREE

Goals, Outcomes and Limitations

Goals

This project will introduce teachers to the concept and advantages of authentic writing and authentic assessment in a child-centered classroom setting. Self-evaluation by the students, and the design and use of rubrics will be presented as part of the authentic assessment process. The author advocates the use of authentic writing and authentic assessment together to facilitate the development of confident, enthusiastic and competent writers. The project's main goal is to help students recognize good writing and become better writers through authentic writing and assessment.

Additionally this project will provide examples of authentic assessment tools of various types and formats. Many of the rubrics were jointly designed by the students and teacher to define writing projects, and were used for both self-assessment by students and teacher evaluation. These sample rubrics demonstrate format, design and use of rubrics in the language arts and content curriculum areas.

Outcomes

The use of authentic writing and assessment involving the use of rubrics will provide valuable information to the

teacher. This information may be used to determine future curriculum, to work with students on an individual and an as-needed basis, and to develop lessons for specific strategies and skills as needed. The use of authentic writing practices will encourage student enthusiasm and involvement in the writing process. Additionally, a majority of the individual students will be able to articulate what good writing is and self-evaluate their own work. The students will also learn to recognize when and where they need assistance on a project.

Limitations

One limitation of this project is the requirement placed on many teachers to assign grades to finished projects, and then transfer those grades to report cards. Giving grades somewhat negates the focus on "process" rather than "product". While the rubrics actually make the process of determining grades fairly easy, it may be necessary to include an overview of a variety of projects to determine progress-over-time. It may take several months for the students to "see" this progress for themselves. They seem to think that a string of "B's" on completed projects is not a sign of progress. It may be necessary to remind students that each project is different and to focus on the project's specific descriptors to see how they have fulfilled the

requirements. Maintaining a file of completed work will help the students reflect back on previous work and see their individual growth.

What may seem to be another limitation is determining if a written project is a "reading", "writing", "social studies", "science" or "math" assignment. One solution would be to design the rubrics to show that the scores will be used in more than subject area.

Additionally, teachers may fear that creating rubrics with students requires too much valuable classroom time and be reluctant to begin this process. Teachers may come to view the time spent on developing rubrics as learning experiences for students which contribute to their meaning-making process, and as a result is time well spent.

The sample rubrics provided in this project are not intended to be copied and used "as is". The process of creating the rubric is a large part of what makes rubrics a valuable learning tool. As the students work to define the project they are about to undertake, they are able to clarify their thoughts and begin the creative process of writing. While it is necessary to create specific rubrics for most projects, there are some "generic" rubrics that can be used to provide both consistency and economy of time.

Authentic writing practices may be applied in any educational setting. The age and ability level of students will impact the development and use of the rubrics. Rubrics can be made to fit almost any age or ability level, especially when created by students and teacher together. It may be necessary to be creative with students who are new learners of English, and to work with the Special Education teacher to encourage authentic writing and assessment.

APPENDIX A:

Give It A Try!

Every teacher enjoys walking into another teacher's room and looking around. We're all eager to "steal" good ideas. Yet few of us actually "steal" an idea in its entirety. We take parts of things and adapt everything to our specific needs and make it our own.

This project is just that. I've taken philosophies and ideas from many wonderful writers, presenters and teachers and created my own writing and assessment program which works for my students and me. Each year we add something new, or take something away to meet our specific needs.

In 1993 I switched from teaching second grade to fourth grade. One of the biggest adjustments for me was the requirement of assigning grades to student work and report cards. I quickly realized that the students had no real understanding of what grading was all about. It seemed to me that grading was a huge mystery to most of the students. The students did not have a sense of empowerment about their grades. I set a goal for myself of involving students not only in the grading process, but in determining what grades should be determined by.

After studying Native Californians in our Social Studies book, and reading as many Indian legends as we could

find, my 4th grade students were writing an original Indian legend. As I met with each student and talked about their story, I realized that some of the students "knew" how to write a successful legend and others didn't. I called the class together and asked students to tell what they thought was necessary to write a good legend.

Our first brainstorm consisted of many, many things listed randomly. I realized this brainstorm might be further confusing students who were already uncertain in the writing realm. Because my students were involved in Writers Workshop, they were familiar with the "Writing Process", so I asked them to tell me which elements related to the "Process" of writing. I then listed these elements on a sheet of paper in blue.

Next we talked about the "Mechanics" or "Conventions" of writing and listed these on another sheet of paper in purple. As we made our lists, we attempted to prioritize and decide which elements were crucial to a well-written paper.

Finally we pulled from the remaining elements and listed these in green on another sheet of paper titled "Content". This was the most challenging list to assimilate as the students were least familiar with the concept of "content". As we made our list, we were also creating a

shared definition of "content". Most students began an on-going process of defining for themselves what constitutes "good writing" in general, and the different elements that go into different genres of writing. This was an exciting time for me as a teacher. I saw my students making huge connections and steps in their learning about writing.

After a great deal of discussion and discovery by all, the students went back to their writing with the goal of incorporating all the elements into their story. That night I typed the 3 areas with the elements listed below onto a sheet of paper. The next day I gave each student a copy of the checklist rubric we had created. (See Appendix B)

When they handed in their "published legend", I used the rubric for grading. I met with each student and we discussed what they did well, what they needed to improve and if they found the rubric useful. The students were very enthusiastic about the rubric, the actual project and their grades. We asked a parent to type all the legends. The students illustrated their own legend, and we sent them to be published. When our two volume edition of Indian Legends by Room 27 arrived in the mail, it was the most popular book in the classroom. I also sent home the original handwritten copies of the students' legends with the rubrics attached. Each rubric was stamped, "Please sign and return". I

received many positive comments from parents about their child's legend and about the grading format being informative and helpful to them as parents.

The students were anxious to begin a new project and create another rubric. With each new project and rubric I saw growth in the students' awareness of writing genres, style, and strategies. The students were able to see their growth as well, their confidence soared, they took more chances, and became better writers.

Rubrics are very helpful in assessing each student's progress. I feel confident that I am fair and consistent with students. I know that the students and I have the same knowledge and expectations about the project. Rubrics also give me valuable information to work with students on individual needs.

Each scored rubric is attached to the project and stamped, "Parent Signature Please". The students then take the project and rubric home and bring it back signed by their parent. The rubrics are all kept in individual files at school; some projects are selected for portfolios and others are sent home.

It is important that students be involved in creating rubrics. Sometimes creating the rubric actually changes the project as the students get a better idea and definition of

what they are doing. Creating the rubric is a process too! Yet, rubrics aren't needed for everything you do in the classroom.

"Generic" rubrics can be created and used for small projects or writing assignments as there are common elements to any writing assignment. When I introduce a new strategy or element such as the mechanics of dialogue, I want to make sure it is on the rubric and might even be broken down into several parts. An added benefit of student involvement in the creation of rubrics is that students are better able to help each other with their work. I've found that students make better editors as well.

I've included samples of three basic types of rubrics: checklist, holistic, and analytical in Appendix B. There are rubrics for both written and oral projects. There are many types of projects: math, maps, timelines, reports, stories, interviews, speeches, oral reports, and response journals. Each can be adapted to any specific project, yet are meant to be a starting place rather than a final product.

It is important that we, as teachers, find ways to help our students become better writers. Katherine Paterson, (1981) author of A Bridge to Terabithia, believes that "when we give the children of the world the words they need, we

are giving them life and growth and refreshment" (p. 6).

Reading good literature with your students is one way to create a community in your classroom. A community where children share experiences through books and events comes alive. As children share emotions through characters and events in books, they want to share their own stories, too. When students write about things inside themselves, they want to express themselves fully. "When children bring the work of their lives to school, they will invest themselves heart and soul" (Calkins, 1991, p. 304). Creating an environment in which students want to write and share is essential. To teach writing, we first need a community that encourages students to share their life stories.

Lucy McCormick Calkins writes,

When children bring their lives into the classroom and we come to know those lives well, we cannot help but want to enrich them. Teachers of writing and reading throughout the world have come to care passionately about workshop teaching, in part because reading and writing are ways in which human beings find significance and direction, beauty and intimacy, in their lives (Calkins, 1991, p. 23).

I am hopeful that you will take the skeleton provided here and adapt it to your needs. If you haven't read Regie

Routman's or Lucy McCormick Calkins' books, they are inspiring places to start. Calkins (1991) writes, "we don't need to be super teachers to teach children to write, but we do need to love and respect our children and to help them love and respect each other -- and themselves (p. 14).

In addition to the original 4th Grade Project Rubrics, included with this project you will find Authentic Writing Information, Authentic Assessment Samples, and Self-Assessment/Reflection worksheets and checklists. These may also be altered to suit you and your students' needs.

APPENDIX B

Original Project
4th Grade Rubrics
Language Arts
Rubrics

ORIGINAL INDIAN LEGEND RUBRIC

Title _____

Author _____

Date _____

PROCESS

YES

NO

Mind Map

Rough Draft

Evidence of Editing

Published Book

CONTENT

Introduction

Middle - details/story development

Conclusion

Descriptive Words

Problem

Solution

Setting

Time

Tribe

Main Character

Other Character

Element of Nature

MECHANICS

Correct Spelling

Periods

Capital Letters

Complete Sentences

Paragraph/Indent

PRESENTATION

Neatness

Illustration

COMMENTS (student/teacher)

**ORIGINAL INDIAN LEGEND
GRADING RUBRIC**

Name _____

Date _____

For a Grade of "C"

Setting
Time
characters
Problem
Solution
Element of Nature
Story Development - makes sense
At least 3 paragraphs
Correct punctuation
Correct Spelling

For a Grade of "B"

All of "C", plus
Details creating interest
Title
Introduction, strong lead sentence
Conclusion
Indented Paragraphs
At least 5 paragraphs
Neat

For a Grade of "A"

All of "C" and "B", plus
Cursive Final draft
Illustration
More details
Descriptions using adjectives
More than 5 paragraphs - developed story

**WRITERS WORKSHOP
GRADING RUBRIC**

Name _____

Date _____

PROCESS

Rough Draft
Evidence of Editing
 for content
 for mechanics
Final Draft

PRESENTATION

Cover
Title Page
Penmanship - print, cursive
Neat
Took time/didn't rush

CONTENT

Creative
Length, well developed story
Makes sense
Good beginning - makes you want to read more
Many details and descriptions
Character development.
Good ending - conclusion

MECHANICS

Complete sentences with correct punctuation
Paragraphs, indented
Quotations/dialogue written correctly
Spelling - priority words
 others - used a dictionary

What I liked about this Writers Workshop Project:

**LIVING DESERT
THANK YOU LETTER**

Name _____

Points _____
(48 possible)

Content (18 points)

Introduction
Thank you
What you liked/learned
How to do a better job
Favorite part - describe - why
Conclusion

FORM - Letter Writing (15 points)

Date
Dear (your docent's name)
Closing
Signature
Letter format

Mechanics (15 points)

Spelling
Capitals
Punctuation
Period/Complete Sentences
Neatness

STORY MOBILE RUBRIC

Name _____

Date _____

Points/Grade _____

ELEMENTS OF STORY

Title/Author

Type of Book/Number of pages

Setting/Time of Book

Main Characters

Problem

Solution

Ending

Recommendation

WRITING

Complete Sentences

Tell "why"

Descriptive words

PRESENTATION

Hangs from ceiling/balanced

Artistic - colorful

Neat - writing, cutting, gluing, drawing

**SPECIAL SPOT DESCRIPTIVE
PARAGRAPH GRADING RUBRIC**

Name _____

Date _____

Points Possible = 69

Score _____

WRITING PROCESS

Student

Teacher

Quick Write
Rough Draft
Editing
Final Draft

CONTENT

Adjectives - Describing Words

Sound

Look

Feel

Taste

Seasons

Your Feelings

Details -Explanation - tell why

Interesting

Introduction - makes us want to read more

Ending - tells us it is the end

MECHANICS

Punctuation - commas, periods

Capitals

Complete sentences

Paragraphs with at least 3 sentences

Spelling

Language - correct usage

At least 3 paragraphs

PRESENTATION

Neat

Cursive

POINTS:

3 = All the time

2 = Some of the time

1 = Forgot

DESCRIPTIVE PARAGRAPH
Personality Characteristics
RUBRIC CHECKLIST

Name _____

Date _____

WRITING PROCESS

YES

NO

Mind Map

Rough Draft

CONTENT

Adjectives - describing words

attitude to others

attitude toward life

likes, dislikes

be creative & reflective, focus on personality

Give examples of characteristics and how they are observed

How you see yourself

How adults, parents, teachers see you

Make comparisons

Tell a secret, or little known fact about yourself

Interesting, humor, suspense, etc.

Variety of words used

MECHANICS

Spelling

Complete Sentences with punctuation

Comments:

FAMILY STORY CHECKLIST RUBRIC

Name _____

PROCESS

YES

NO

Homework/summaries

Oral report/story telling

Rough draft

Evidence of editing

Completed final draft/published in class book

CONTENT

Lead - opening sentence interesting

Dialogue

Descriptive - interesting adjectives

Details - does reader really know what happened?

Ending -

Makes sense - are events told in order?

MECHANICS

Complete sentences

Paragraphs - indented

Punctuation

Spelling

Did you read what you wrote?

PRESENTATION

Neat

Cursive

Comments:

**ON THE DAY I WAS BORN
PUBLISHED BOOK**

Name _____

Grade _____

PRESENTATION

Neatness
Cursive
Illustrations
Title Page
Cover
Dedication

CONTENT

Made good use of information provided by parent in
interview
Some order/makes sense
Illustrations go with information on that page
Used photograph from home in creative way
Used information about nature
Used information about family

MECHANICS

Able to be read and be understood by parent

WRITTEN DOG REPORT RUBRIC

Name _____

Date _____

Points _____

CONTENT

Introduction

Details/Information

Name

Physical Description

Temperament

Job

Place where might live

Family or one person dog

How to care for

Conclusion - personal evaluation

Information well organized

Makes sense

Informative - reader learns something

MECHANICS

Complete sentences

Punctuation

Spelling

Capital Letters

Paragraph/indenting

PRESENTATION

Neatness

Illustration

Cursive or typed

Cover/Title page

Bibliography - research information

POINTS: 3 = COMPLETE, ALL THE TIME
 2 = MOST OF THE TIME
 1 = INCOMPLETE
 0 = FORGOT, DID NOT DUE

**INTERVIEW WRITTEN REPORT
RUBRIC**

Name _____

Date _____

Points Earned _____

Grade _____

MECHANICS - 24 points possible

Spelling

Capitals/Periods

Complete Sentences

Punctuation/Quotations

Paragraphs/Indented

CONTENT - 24 points possible

Introduction

Conclusion

Facts/Information/Details

Name, age, born, lived, family,
friends, pets, war, jobs, travels,
wishes, how life was different than
yours, advice to youth

Information well organized

Makes sense

Tells a story bout the person

Personal association with person

Interesting - keeps the reader involved

PRESENTATION - 21 points

Cover

Title page

Illustration, photos

Dedication

Neat & organized & attractive

Creative

Typed, cursive or computer

WRITING PROCESS - 18 points

Questions

Answers

Outline

Rough Draft

Evidence of editing by student

Final Draft

**ISLAND OF THE BLUE DOLPHINS
MAP RUBRIC**

Name _____

Total Points _____

PROCESS

Points/Comments

List with page numbers
Rough Sketch
Completed Project

CONTENT

Compass Rose
Scale
Coral Cove
Two rocks in Coral Cove
2 Springs
Headland - Karana's home
Aleut Camp
Galasat
Wild Dog's Cave
Place where canoes were hidden
Sea Cave
Other locations

PRESENTATION

Use of paper
Use of color
Neatness
Illustrations
Organization

MECHANICS

Spelling
Capitals
Abbreviations

POINTS will be awarded as follows:

- 4 - Excellent, consistent, all the time
- 3 - Most of the time
- 2 - Some of the time
- 1 - Forgot most of the time - need to work on this
- 0 - Didn't do

Oral Report

Rubrics

STORY TELLING - FAMILY STORY
Oral Language

Name _____

Date _____

Grade _____

For a "C"

- * Few details
- * Introduction, ending
- * Tell story in order (sequence)
so it makes sense

For a "B"

- * All of "C", plus
- * More details
- * Eye contact with audience
- * Loud, clear voice
- * Self-control

For an "A"

- * All of "C" and "B", plus
- * Expression and body movement
- * Props
- * Can tell you have practiced

**PAPER BAG SPEECH
ORAL PRESENTATION RUBRIC**

Name _____

Date _____

SPEAKING SKILLS

Look at audience

Good speaking voice (loud & clear)

INTRODUCTION

INCLUDE YOURSELF

INCLUDE ALL FAMILY MEMBERS

Tell hobbies & interests

INTERESTING

Humor

Short stories

Not too long or too short

CONCLUSION

Was there an ending?

PREPARATION

Were you prepared?

Did you practice?

Science

Rubrics

**SCIENCE - MARINE MAMMALS
ORAL REPORT/PRESENTATION RUBRIC**

Title _____
Students Involved _____

Date _____

Grade _____

PRESENTATION

YES

NO

Well planned
Good voice
Shared - all participated
Look at audience
Props

WHAT YOU LEARNED

Use what you already knew
Read books
Used magazines
Computer Information
Asked others

CONTENT

Shows thought, time & energy
Neat and complete
Creative
Future questions

TEAMWORK

Work shared by all
Worked well together
Stayed on task
Completed in determined time

COMMENTS: by all team members and Mrs. Cleland

**SCIENCE OBSERVATION
DESCRIPTIVE PARAGRAPH RUBRIC**

Name _____
Points Possible = 60

Date _____
Score _____

WRITING PROCESS

Quick Write
Final Draft

STUDENT

TEACHER

CONTENT

Adjectives -
 Sound
 Look
 Feel
 Taste
 Your feelings
Details/Explanations/Why
Interesting
Title
Introduction - draws us in
Ending - conclusion

MECHANICS

Punctuation - commas, periods
Capitals when needed
Complete Sentences
Paragraph with at least 3 sentences
Correct spelling
Correct language usage

PRESENTATION

Neat
Cursive

POINTS: 3 = ALL THE TIME
 2 = SOME OF THE TIME
 1 = NOT VERY MUCH
 0 = FORGOT

SCIENCE PROJECT GRADING RUBRIC

SCORING: Points in each category will be awarded as follows:

- 3 = Very thorough, well-done job
- 2 = Needs corrections/improvements
- 1 = Incomplete, requires additional work
- 0 = Forgot, did not do

SCIENTIFIC THOUGHT (Content of the Project)

1. Follows Scientific Method of Investigation
2. QUESTION - manageable and capable of being investigated
3. HYPOTHESIS - based on research conducted prior to procedure being done
4. MATERIALS - complete list
5. PROCEDURE/EXPERIMENT - provides valid, reliable & accurate data which tests the hypothesis
6. VARIABLES - identified and controlled
7. SAMPLE SIZE - large enough and/or repeated the procedure to provide enough data to analyze
8. DATA/OBSERVATIONS - summarized using charts, graphs or tables
9. JOURNAL - includes notes, observations & original data
10. CONCLUSIONS - based on data, logical & relevant to the question and hypothesis
11. ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS - demonstrates an understanding of remaining unanswered questions

Science Project Grading Rubric (page 2)

CREATIVITY

- 12. ORIGINAL
- 13. WORK DONE BY STUDENT
- 14. CREATIVE USE OF MATERIALS

PRESENTATION

- 15. DISPLAY - shows logical progression of project
- 16. EVIDENCE OF TIME & EFFORT
- 17. NEAT & ORGANIZED
- 18. WRITING (correct grammar, spelling, capitals, punctuation)

Social Studies

Rubrics

CALIFORNIA HISTORY TIMELINE

Name _____

Grade _____

PRESENTATION

Neat
Colorful
Expressive Art
Complete
Well organized

CONTENT

At least 7 important events
Correct dates of events
Events in order on timeline
Concise wording of event
Written in own words

MECHANICS

Able to be read & understood by others
Read by author - checked for mistakes

**CALIFORNIA CITY REPORT
GRADING RUBRIC**

Name _____

Date _____

FOR A GRADE OF "C", YOU WILL NEED:

- City in California
- A few details
- 15 sentences, 5 paragraphs
- Illustration - map to show city location
- Punctuation - capitals, periods, commas
- Cover
- Neat

FOR A GRADE OF "B", YOU WILL NEED:

- All of C, plus
- 2 illustrations (map plus illustration)
- More details
- More than 15 sentences
- All correct spelling
- Indented paragraphs

FOR A GRADE OF "A", YOU WILL NEED:

- All of C and B, plus
- More than 2 illustrations (does not have to be original art), graphs, charts
- Cursive or typed or computer
- Even more details/information
- Title page
- Table of Contents
- Bibliography

**CALIFORNIA REGION
INFORMATIVE ESSAY RUBRIC**

Name _____
Grade _____

Date _____

WRITING PROCESS

Mind Map/pre-writing activity
Rough draft
Revision evidence (initialed by 2 students)
Final Draft

CONTENT

Introductory paragraph - lead sentence
Adjectives (color, size, shape, smell,
touch, sound, feelings)
Details/facts/information (climate,
natural resources, cities,
interesting information)
Historical information
Personal association
Was it interesting?
Was there enough information
Did you read what you wrote?
Did it make sense?
Conclusion

MECHANICS

Spelling (dictionary use? priority words?)
Capital letters
Complete sentences/periods
Punctuation
Well organized information - paragraphs
Was there a flow to the writing - good order?

PRESENTATION

Cover
Title Page
Illustration/photos, etc.
Neatness - computer, typed or cursive
Evidence of time spent

SELF-EVALUATION

Area I plan to work on with next report:

Write 2 pluses and 1 wish on the back of this paper.

Math
Rubrics

DECEMBER MATH PROJECT

SPEND \$100.00 ON HOLIDAY GIFTS!

You are given \$100.00 to spend on holiday gifts this year. You need to decide who you will gifts for, how much you will spend on each gift, what you will buy, and where you are going to shop. This needs to be realistic Christmas shopping. Use catalogs, newspaper and store ads to find your gifts and exact prices. Example:

Uncle Jesse	Photo Album	\$19.99	Macy's
-------------	-------------	---------	--------

PREPARATION

1. Make a list of at least 5 people you will buy presents for. If you don't have 5 people in your immediate family you can include grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, friends, and pets.
2. Make a list of what you plan to buy, how much it will cost, and where you will buy it.
3. Total your purchases.
4. BONUS: add 7.75% sales tax to each item.
5. Total your entire purchases (bonus: total + tax).
6. Make sure you have stayed within your budget. Show if you have any money remaining.

PRESENTATION:

1. Cut out or draw pictures of each item. (Use catalog or store ads!)
2. Organize your gift buying in a chart format. Include pictures, people, gifts, store, cost, tax (for bonus) and total in your chart.

RUBRIC FOR GRADING CHART

People	5 points
Gifts	5 points
Cost	5 points
Stores	5 points
Total/remaining money	3 points
Organization	5 points
Neatness	5 points
Attractiveness	5 points
Sales Tax	7 points (on each item & in total)
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>40 points</u>
<u>with bonus</u>	<u>47 points</u>

APPENDIX C

Self-Assessment
& Reflection Worksheets

For Students

Title of Work:	
The things I like best about this work are:	
because	
The one new thing I learned while doing this work is:	
One thing I would change if I did this work again would be:	
This PORTFOLIO work represents the best I can do, or shows improvement and growth this year.	
Signature	Date

(Cleland 1996)

Title of Work _____

The things I like best about this work are:_____

3 things learned by doing this work:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

One thing I might change if I did this work again would be:

This PORTFOLIO work represents the best I can do or show
improvements and growth this year.

Student Signature

Date

(Cleland 1994)

THREE PLUSES AND A WISH

Presenters _____

Date _____

I liked _____

I liked _____

I liked _____

I wish _____

Dr. Katharine Busch
California State University, San Bernardino

GLAZER ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

Descriptors to Define Writing	Comments by Student
The writing tells about the topic.	
The writing includes VOCABULARY that helps to get the message to the reader. (verbs, adverbs, adjectives, noun phrases that add interest.	
The writing includes different SENTENCE STRUCTURES and FORMS of writing that make my topic sound interesting.	
The piece is ORGANIZED logically. There are enough episodes to convince readers that a goal is reached.	
PUNCTUATION helps the audience understand ideas.	
DETAILS describe ideas.	
REPETITION of words, phrases, sentence structure help the reader understand the writing.	
SUMMARY:	

Child's name _____ Date _____
 Name of piece of writing _____
 Reason for writing _____

(Glazer 1995)

APPENDIX D

Authentic Assessment

Samples

WRITING RUBRIC

Name _____

Date _____

Category	Consistent	Inconsistent	Comments
Able to write a coherent draft			
Willingly take suggestions from peers and teacher			
Able to give constructive feedback to a peer's draft			
Attempts to incorporate descriptive language			
Takes responsibility for revising			
Proofreads for others			
Completes writing on time			
Keeps writing folder organized and up to date			
Learning to take meaningful notes			
In content areas, incorporates and seeks out multiple references			

FINAL GRADE _____

GRADING SYSTEM

- A = consistent for all areas (9 out of 10)
- B = consistent for most areas (8 out of 10)
- C = consistent for many areas (7 out of 10)
- D = consistent for some areas (6 out of 10)
- F = inconsistent for many areas (5 or fewer out of 10)

LITERATURE LOG
READING RESPONSE JOURNAL

Name _____
Date _____

Name of Book _____

Author _____

Number of Pages _____

Number of Points	Qualities of Written Responses
5 to 6 High-Level Response	<p>*You take experiences in the book and relate them to things that have happened to you. You make connections to things in your own life that the book reminds you of.</p> <p>*You use descriptive vocabulary (suspenseful instead of good, caring instead of nice).</p> <p>*You tell your feelings and opinions about what you have read and use examples from the book to show WHY!</p> <p>*You show you understand the characters by explaining why the character did what he/she did, and what else the character might have done.</p> <p>*You make predictions about what is going to happen next, or about how the book might end.</p>
3 to 4 Mid-Level Response	<p>*You tell your feelings about the book, but sometimes forget to give examples from the book.*Your vocabulary is good, but you may use words over and over. Not enough variety.*You understand the character but do not go beyond what happens in the book to show your understanding.*You give a thorough re-telling of the book.</p>
1 to 2 Low-Level Response	<p>Your re-telling of the book is incomplete or inaccurate.*Your vocabulary is very basic, you use the same words over and over.*You share your opinion of the book, but you do not tell WHY!</p> <p>*You do not show that you understand what kind of people the characters are.</p> <p>*You show little effort in your responses.</p>

WRITTEN LANGUAGE RUBRIC
(Holistic Criteria for Evaluation of Written Work)

Score

6. Exceptional Achievement:
 - Developed in a logical manner demonstrating good understanding and organization.
 - Occasional errors but generally well written, well organized and adequately developed.
 - Is fluent and generally free of errors with good paragraph structure.
5. Commendable Achievement:
 - Deals with the topic completely but lacks detail and development of a "6" response.
 - Is free of serious mechanical and syntactical errors.
 - Logically organized, but may have some problems with sentence organization.
4.
 - May be superficial, repetitive and simplistic.
 - Parts may not be adequately developed or logically related to each other.
 - Contains some grammatical and mechanical errors, but these are not serious barriers to meaning and they can be corrected through edition.
3. Evidence of Achievement:
 - Fails to treat some part of the topic.
 - Does not relate logically the parts of the essay.
 - Includes substantial digression.
 - There are a number of serious errors which impede meaning and can only be corrected by rewriting.
 - Meaning is unclear in some parts and the general development is weak.
2. Limited Evidence of Achievement:
 - Treats the subject partially or has scant development.
 - Paper needs complete revision.
1. Minimal Evidence of Achievement:
 - Totally inadequate.
 - Does not demonstrate sufficient skill in written language.
0. No Response.

HOLISTIC GRADING CRITERIA

Score	
6	A superior response will discuss the topic in detail, giving a clearly defined topic sentence with a liberal use of appropriate transitional words and phrases (within and between paragraphs) to make a cohesive whole. Though it may have a minimal number of errors, it will be generally well written, well organized, adequately developed, and will contain a title. A superior response will include elaboration and appropriate detail and will be longer.
5	Like a 6 paper, a 5 paper will answer all parts of the question in detail. It, however, may lack in one or two characteristics of the superior response, i.e., logical connection between parts or sufficient detail. It will have more mechanical errors than a 6 paper. It should contain an original title.
4	This score will reflect papers which are not thoroughly developed or organized. They may have more errors in mechanics and usage than a 5 point paper. The errors, however, are not serious barriers to meaning and can be readily or editionally corrected.
3	This score will reflect papers which fail to treat and develop some part of the topic or which fail to relate, logically, the parts of the essay. These papers may include substantial digression and a number of serious errors in mechanics and usage. Serious errors are those which impede meaning and can only be corrected by rewriting. The meaning is generally unclear and weak.
2	This score will reflect papers which treat the subject partially and which have scant development. These papers have many serious errors and need complete revision to adequately answer the topic.
1	This score will reflect papers which are totally inadequate. The writer has not exhibited sufficient skill in written English and has not responded to the topic.
0	No written response.

Simple 4 Point Rating Scale

4	3	2	1	0
Well organized	Well organized	Sketchy, incomplete	Confusing, no organization	Paper can't be scored
Complete	Complete	Tried to meet assignment-missed a bit	Barely meets assignment	Blank or wrote about other topic
Meets assignment	Meets assignment			
Focused idea	May show some confusion	Unfocused ideas	No main idea	
Beginning, middle, end	Beginning, middle, end	Gaps in organization		
Interesting	Not as much depth		Dull	Only copies assignment
Transitions	Simple transitions	Lacks transition	No transitions	
Sentence variety	Some simple sentences	Many simple sentences	Short repetitive sentences	
Details	Details	Lacks some details		
Shows not tells (metaphors)	Shows not tells (metaphors)	Gap-reader makes inferences	Tells No detail	
Varied and exact vocabulary	Varied and exact vocabulary	General vocabulary not exact	Dull word choice	
Few convention errors	Some convention errors	More serious convention errors	Convention errors interfere with meaning	

EVALUATION OF WRITING PROCESSES

Student _____

Grade _____ Age _____

Evaluator _____

Date _____

WRITING PROCESSES		YES	SOME	NO
1	Generates and organizes major ideas or concepts.			
2	Expands, extends, or elaborates on major ideas or concepts.			
3	Integrates meaning into a logical and coherent whole.			
4	Uses a variety of linguistic cues: textual, semantic, syntactic, graphophonic.			
5	Uses a variety of text aides: pictures, charts, graphs, subheadings, etc.			
6	Uses relevant background knowledge.			
7	Predicts/plans upcoming meanings based on what has been previously written.			
8	Revises when meaning is lost or when purpose/intentions or the needs of the audience are not met.			
9	Uses writing to explore ideas and to discover new meanings.			
10	Reflects on, responds and reacts to what is being written.			
11	Uses writing for a variety of purposes and functions.			
12	Varies the manner in which texts are written based on different purposes, intentions, and audiences.			
13	Takes risks.			
14	Sentences are meaningful as written			
15	Revises conventions: spelling, punctuation, capitalization, penmanship, etc. -- after meaning and purpose/intentions are met.			

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